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## IN HIS STUDY

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To see Dr. Harper in his study was to see him at his best. Shut in among his books, he was in complete harmony with his environment. Here was his haven of refuge from the cares and responsibilities of public life that sought him more and more frequently and persistently. His ability to leave all these disturbing and distracting interests on the outside of his study-door was one of the indispensable prerequisites to the accomplishment by him of so much literary and scholarly work during the later years of his life. In his study, as elsewhere, he was able to bring all of his marvelous strength to bear on the task in hand. There was no dissipation of energy on account of divided interests; all the powers of his mind were devoted for the time being to the solution of the problem, or completion of the task, he had set himself. In such work as this he took keen delight and found abiding satisfaction.

President Harper's pleasure in his scholarly pursuits may be accounted for in part as the joy felt by every normal man in the performance of his own chosen work. But it was more than this. It was the inevitable accompaniment of his purpose in all his studies. That purpose was not the attainment of learning for its own sake, but rather for the added power it furnished for the furtherance of the great constructive aims of his life. He was never the scholarly recluse, but always the apostle of learning. He never forgot his mission to teach. Consequently his scholarly labors produced results of two distinct kinds, the first being those in the realm of pure scholarship and intended for the select few who specialize in Semitic studies; the second, those intended to present the assured results of scholarly research in intelligible and attractive form to the mind of the average man. The great value and efficacy of the latter propaganda were due in no small measure to the accuracy and authority they derived from the more specialized and technical studies upon which they were

based. Dr. Harper's keen interest in this general, educational work along biblical lines is attested by the relatively large amount of time he gave out of his precious hours of study to the preparation of such works as his elementary textbooks in Hebrew, his series of "Constructive Studies," and popular articles and editorials in the *Biblical World* and its predecessors.

In undertaking a new piece of investigation, Dr. Harper brought to it an open mind. In so far as it is possible for an intelligent man, he came to his task free from any preconceived ideas regarding its outcome, determined to discover the facts and to allow them to speak for themselves. He was a zealous lover of Truth, and spared no pains necessary to find it. His zeal in this cause knew no bounds; and in this behalf toil was a pleasure, and misunderstanding and vituperation but light afflictions which were for the moment.

It was his habit to work in accordance with carefully considered plans. He made a program for each quarter's work, assigning to each day and to each hour its specific task. The same systematic, methodical spirit ruled his study hours. He invariably worked out a plan for the performance of every piece of study or writing. He analyzed his subject in advance down to the most minute detail, and decided fully upon the method of procedure. Having done this, he was able to move steadily forward, without let or hindrance, to the consummation of his efforts.

Another characteristic that facilitated the progress of his labors was his exceptional ability to utilize the products of preceding and contemporary scholars. He never wasted his time in doing over again things that had already been done satisfactorily. Nor did he believe in taking time to do things which were of such a character that they could be done for him by his co-laborers. He had the faculty of enabling his assistants to see with his eyes and to follow his methods so faithfully that the product of their co-operating minds was as much his as it was theirs, and could be utilized to the fullest advantage in the fabric of the final structure. His method, then, was first of all to get before him everything of value that had ever been said upon the subject with which he was dealing, and familiarize himself with it thoroughly. Such an inundation of other men's thoughts would drown out all originality of method and conception in the minds of most men.

But the strength of Dr. Harper's mental individuality protected him from this danger, and enabled him to assume an independent, critical attitude toward our inheritance of learning, to select from it such elements as seemed to him to accord with known facts, and on the basis of this deposit to erect his own building. Contact with the thoughts of other men did but stimulate his own creative mind to larger and richer suggestiveness. He was thus able to work and think through to his own solution of a problem unhindered and unprejudiced by the knowledge of other men's attempts to solve it. His independence and originality are evidenced also by his ability to break new ground, as, e. g., in his application of the inductive method to the study of Hebrew and its cognates, and in his attempts to reconstruct the poetical utterances of the prophets at a time when scarcely any attention had been given to the poetic structure of prophecy.

Dr. Harper possessed the patience of the scholar in an eminent degree. He would not hurry an important piece of investigation. The fact that his commentary on Amos and Hosea was fourteen years in the making is proof of this statement. It might have been published long before, had he been content to do less thorough work. But he was himself his most relentless critic. The greater part of it was worked over time and time again before he consented to consider it finished. The element of time scarcely entered into his thought. He expended time, strength, and money unstintedly upon the preparation of this his *opus magnum*. It was with him a labor of love. He worked easily and rapidly. He was able to penetrate to the heart of a problem as unerringly as if guided by instinct. His decisions were made promptly when once he was in possession of all the facts. Consequently he was able to turn out a mass of work in certain lines on short notice. But in those paths where progress is necessarily slow he was never so unwise as to be in haste. Here he applied himself with indefatigable energy and patient continuance that meant success. How a man oppressed by so many cares and interested in so many great enterprises could sit down to a lifelong task among his books and papers, and work away as calmly and steadily as though all time were at his disposal, was a constant occasion of wonder and admiration.

The study was the starting-point of most of Dr. Harper's activities.

In it he delved into the heart of things; there he learned what scholarship was; there he developed the ideals which controlled his whole life-work; and there he found recreation, refreshment, and solace amid the years of arduous toil involved in bringing those ideals to tangible realization. His hours in the study gave solidity and value to his instruction in the classroom and from the lecture platform. The scope and ideals of the University of which he was the guiding spirit are the direct outcome of his devotion to a high order of scholarship. Had he not been rooted and grounded in the wisdom and learning of the past, and in sympathy, therefore, with the noblest educational ideals of the race, who knows but that he might have given the Middle West a mere school of applied science, instead of a great university standing for the promotion of all phases of human knowledge?

His own high standards of scholarship for himself led him to expect of his colleagues work of an equally high grade. His constant pursuit of Semitic learning kept him in touch with the many other scholars comprising the various faculties of the University, rendered him sympathetic with them in their frequent sacrifices for the sake of their beloved science, made him appreciative of good scholarly work whenever he found it, and led him to do everything in his power to facilitate the progress of every piece of scientific investigation.

By tastes and training a scholar, by natural endowments qualified to attain a commanding position among the scholars of his generation, and loving and longing intensely for the life of the scholar in the quiet companionship of his books, Dr. Harper did not hesitate to sacrifice his inclinations and prospects upon the altar of a greater service to humanity when the conviction was borne in upon him that the good of the causes he held so dear was to be furthered by his exchanging the study for the office. But through his self-renunciation other men have been and will be enabled to make more and better use of their studies, and the science of Old Testament interpretation, though losing greatly through the withdrawal of so much of his time and strength, has gained a dignity and a vantage-ground, not only in a great university, but also in the entire Mississippi Valley, which it could otherwise not have attained.